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DR. GOLD'S ADDRESS

TO

THE CANDIDATES

FOR THE

DEGREE OF DOCTOR IN MEDICINE,

IN THE

Medical Institution of Yale College,

JANUARY 12, 1860.

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THE DUTIES OF THE PHYSICIAN.

THE

ANNUAL ADDRESS

TO THE

CANDIDATES FOR DEGREES

IN THE

Medical Institution of Yale College,

January 12, 1860.

BY

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Physical power, however immensely useful it may be, is only an instrumentality of our being ; while the mind, by which it is directed and controlled, is pre-eminent in importance. Superiority of mind is ever a distinguishing qualification of greatness ; for without intellect, will, heart and the qualities generally constituting mind, nothing valuable would remain. Mind is the eternal fountain of thought and action—matter alone has no power of motion ; it is only moved by the operation of laws which mind has established. Mind then is the great creative and moving power in the universe.

Immutable as are the laws which control all things, yet change is every where in progress ; but nothing happens by chance. The germ which is now swelling and bursting its acorn shell, will at length, extend aloft its giant arms and defy the blasts of winter in the rugged oak ; and the white foam which now adorns the crest of the ocean wave was once exhaled in fragrance from the morning violet.

The earth is full of changes. Its diurnal and annual revolutions are hourly changing its position and surface ; within, volcanic fires are continually altering its structure ; while on its surface nations are born and die ; generations succeed each other, and the tide of human life, like a swollen river, forever flows on to the great ocean of eternity. While all these changes occur, the laws which produce them, never alter ; but stand as witnesses, of the unchanging Almighty mind of Him by whom they were established. Various as are the capacities of *human* mind and changing as human opinions may be, the laws, which govern mind, are unalterable. The soul of

man, that impress upon the finite of the infinite ; that ever living, thinking part of our nature, how vast its powers, how important its development and destiny. The human mind is the arena in which truth and falsehood wage against each other an incessant warfare ; where the sweetest and foulest, the noblest and vilest emotions and sentiments in turn fashion and rule over human actions.

Such is the nature of the human mind, that it is ever restless and illimitable in its aspirations. With wants and desires unsatisfied, it grasps continually for something new, and seeks to extend the area of its action. In proportion to its capacity, is the force which demands enlargement, and in proportion to the increasing strength, is the augmented desire, for higher reaches and broader explorations. Thus has the world's surface, exhibited for six thousand years, an arena of innumerable contests, and the passing of ever varying scenes.

The action of mind upon mind, and mind upon matter, through each successive age, has wrought out various results ; often evil for the time, but mostly in the end for good ; yet through all the turmoil and strife, through all the wreck and ruin of contending and upheaving forces, civilization has been advanced, the arts and sciences developed and improved, and the human mind thus stimulated and aided by these successive causes, is still pluming itself for higher flights and reaching for new acquisitions.

In all the walks of life, in all the countless measure of human intellect, the same great moving power of mind, with a force in proportion to capacity exists. " 'Tis the Divinity which stirs within us." Its *successful* action is productive of pleasure, and the philosopher, as he climbs, with toilsome steps the hill of science feels his heart glow with joyous emotion, at every new triumph of knowledge. It was this law of the human mind which induced Diogenes to adopt a philosophy, which, sought happiness by diminishing the wants of life, to the smallest possible compass ; and it was the same which led Alexander, to grasp a world, and which influenced

the latter to say, that, “ if he were not Alexander, he would be Diogenes.”

The *consciousness of mental power* arouses ambition. When the terrific scenes of the French Revolution, had passed away, and the French Capitol began again to wear the aspect of luxurious gaiety, there was one, then of obscure and humble position, who, though moving amidst the glitter and fashion of that gay metropolis, without a glimpse of the star of that high destiny which awaited him, was restless and discontented. The absence of the powerful stimulus which his capacious mind demanded, rendered him less satisfied, than were the ordinary class of minds around him. He sought the element suited to feed his giant intellect, and gratify his vaulting ambition ; and not France alone, but Europe for a time, became astonished at the splendor of his achievements, and trembled at the name of Napoleon.

It was the operation of this principle that directed the steps of a poor and humble boy to leave his New England home, to seek his fortune in a distant city ; where he was to build a world wide fame, by a long, active and useful life ; and to the imperishable list of patriots, scholars and statesmen, to add the name of Benjamin Franklin. It is the power of mind which operates in the countless forms of enterprise, which explore the ocean and the land. It builds navies, cities and empires. It struggles for power, for supremacy. Its power is felt in the forum, and by the press it wields its sceptre over human action. By turns, it makes the welkin ring with shouts of freedom or tramples millions under the iron heel of oppression. Good and evil by turns ride in its triumphal car. The animal creation yield to its supremacy ; and the most potent elements of earth or air become its submissive servants. Such is the immortal spirit—the soul of man, and such the disposition and power it has, for action.

A desire to *know* something—to *do* something—to *be* something, to make however perishable a mark it may be, on the sands of time, is a principle implanted in the nature of man.

The ploughman, "With toil's bright dew-drops on his sun-burnt brow," feels it, however obscurely, as he marks the green sward with his skillful hand ; the orator more sensibly as he holds the attentive multitude, in silent admiration, by the power of his eloquence ; the scholar as he explores the depths of science or peruses the pages of classic lore ; and the poet's heart beats with pleasurable emotion as his glowing imagination weaves the beautiful texture of thought, that shall enrapture other minds, and inscribe his name upon the imperishable tablets of Fame.

The testimony, young gentlemen, which each of you, might to-day render, would prove the truth of this principle ; you have been "anxious and impatient to spread your untried sails upon an untried sea, and upon a voyage which involves all the chances—evil as well as good—of existence." You have left the endeared scenes of your childhood, and struggled through all the strong barriers, with which affectionate tenderness, and endearing associations of home may have encircled you, to confine you there. You have sought knowledge, and with toil acquired it. Are you now entirely satisfied ? Does not that knowledge demand enlargement ? Are you willing to fall back, upon the unknowing and unknown condition from which you have emerged ? Do you desire freedom from all care—do you choose to suspend all effort ? No—you cannot escape the care by suspending the effort. The corrosion of rust would augment care and make life a burden. Yield then yourselves to the full influence of this salutary force. Let high aspirations after something better, urge you on to still higher attainments and whatever attainable good there may be, it will be yours.

Young Gentlemen, well may you rejoice that the day-dawn of your active and professional life has come. Looking out upon the stage, on which you now are to become actors in the great drama of life, what hopes and desires of future success and usefulness invite you to step upon that stage, to per-

form the parts for which you have spent years in arduous preparation.

Permit me to congratulate you, on the auspicious and honorable position which you have attained ; and welcome you to a participation in the intellectual and social pleasures of a learned and time honored fraternity. And now new duties and increased responsibilities demand attention in this newly and nobly acquired position. You enter the profession at a peculiarly favorable period of time, and under the most fortunate circumstances. The Medical profession *never* stood higher. It never embraced more sound and scientific men than now. At no earlier period has it exhibited, in general, a higher moral tone, than the present ; and, never before, did it hold a firmer stand upon honor and truth ; or shake from its skirts, the soiling touch of Empiricism, with a more thorough appreciation of its folly and worthlessness.

While our country stands unrivaled for rapid growth, speeding onward to the full attainment of her glory ; and while the whole civilized world is enjoying a degree of unprecedented knowledge and development of the various arts, what mind of any capacity, would not, amid such an array of favoring circumstances, feel the strong swayings of that great instinctive principle, which impels to action.

An educated mind now can accomplish vastly more, in any given time, than a similar mind could have attained, before the scientific, commercial and social machinery of our day, was introduced to successful operation. The great field of nature has been minutely and widely explored. All the branches of Natural History have been traced by the hand of learning and industry, and afford you their richly acquired stores. Every department of the Medical Profession is replete with knowledge, gathered by master minds.

With such stores of intellectual wealth, you possess a no less advantageous physical position. Now in brief time we can visit foreign countries, and traverse our own and other lands with a velocity before unknown. We glean daily news

from almost every part of our own country, and but a few weeks is needed, to spread before us in our own homes the intelligence we may desire, from nearly every part of the civilized world.

Under such a state of progressive action as now moves the world who would, think to appropriate to himself the utopian sentiment of the Roman poet, "*Otium cum dignitate.*"—There used to exist a class of men called "gentlemen of leisure," who could boast, even on *their death beds*, that they "had never earned a dollar in their lives." But we trust, that amidst the present progress of invention and enterprise, and the force of steam and electricity, "such occupation is gone."

Young Gentlemen ;—To obtain eminence and ultimate success, you must not only avoid indolence and *pleasure-seeking*, but you must be *labor-seeking* men. Neglect no legitimate means for honorable advantage. Shun no effort for gaining the noble end, because it demands toil for its acquisition. Measure your time ; measure your own capacity ; economize your powers, while you invest them all in the great struggle of life. Should you fail of the desired end, the fault will be yours ; should you succeed nobly in life, the instrumentality will have been yours. While it is urged upon you, individually, to be the builders of your own fortunes, you will not forget the great truth, that, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps,"—and that the divine blessing is necessary to your success. Nevertheless, things are so arranged, that "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." While "idleness clothes a man in rags," industry will no less reap its rewards. The frugal and laborious husbandman fills his granaries and barns with the fruits of his fields. The same principle is found true in all the pursuits of life—would you obtain an honorable distinction in your profession, *labor for it*—rally all the powers which you possess for its accomplishment ; and as sure as the timely sown seed in the well tilled soil will produce an abundant harvest, so may you rely upon

success. Time and toil may wear deep furrows on the brow and make their impress on the manly form ere the last sheaf of that harvest shall be gathered ; but as you advance in your honorable career, the germ will in due time appear—the buds and flowers, and the ripening fruits will follow each other to the waving grain, and the garner will be filled with the rich golden harvest which your own hands will have gathered.

Early manhood, the brightest link in the chain of human life is yours. The brain now is full of vital energy. The heart beats strong with the flood tide of life. Hope, unbroken, gleams brightly in the bosom, and a busy world invites you to action. Before you lies one straight and narrow path extending to the end of life. It is the path of *Duty*—a thousand diverging paths lie near it ; each of which leads to certain evil. But it is only this single, narrow path, which will conduct the traveler to happiness—you may easily know it ; for the golden beams of Heaven illuminate it, and the star of truth enlightens it, to guide you safely through this life ; and if pursued with undeviating steps, will conduct you to the portals of a blessed immortality ; where faith will end in a glorious vision, and hope in an unbounded fruition.

Let this great moral chart be ever kept fully before your minds—you will find it beautifully and minutely portrayed in the BIBLE, a book which I would recommend to your daily perusal and study. That book is marked with the same divine impress of Almighty power, wisdom and goodness, that you have already found in all your investigations of the material world. It is the moral sun, from which emanates the light and life-giving warmth, which guides the wanderer, comforts the sorrowful, strengthens the feeble, lights the star of hope in the breast of the dying and sheds its effulgence upon all who are willing to enjoy its benefits.

The future lies an unbroken field and in uncertain prospect before you. The anticipations of youthful mind may indeed behold it effulgent with the light of hope. Here and there a bright silvery cloud may seem to repose in beauty amidst an

azure sky. Sweet fields may appear redolent with the aroma of spring flowers, or smiling joyfully in the serenity and rich luxuriance of summer ; but when *that future* shall have been fully explored ; when the last footstep of life's entire experience shall fall ; and you look upon the stern realities of the past, this arcadian loveliness will have vanished. A well spent life may leave much to contemplate with satisfaction ; but every *wrong* action will then come home to give anguish to the soul. That brilliant array of earthly hopes which appear so lovely to day, will have vanished forever. The suggestion is not designed for discouragement, but the avoidance of disappointment and final regret. So far as you *can* and *do* wisely live in all that is virtuous and good, so will your end be peaceful and happy.

The profession which you have chosen has its peculiar trials, cares and duties. The relationship, which exists between the physician and the public is one of mutual responsibility. Each is interested in every accession to the medical numbers, directly involving the health, the lives and welfare of the community. If unqualified men assume the responsibilities of the medical profession a great evil is the consequence. But when such as are well qualified enter that field of duty, the labors of no profession can sum up a greater amount of good. Should the former class be neglected, should such be treated as nuisances, empyrios, or poltroons, by an intelligent and virtuous community, it would only be in unison with the ordinary application of that rigorous condemnation, which vice ever demands at the hand of virtue. On the other hand how ought those of the latter class to be estimated ? How ought the good and intelligent physician, to be treated by the community in which he lives ? Should he be put upon a level with the charlatan, the ignoramus, the mere pretender, the monomaniacal practitioner of infinitessimals, or the patent-right vender of physic, of the nature of which, and of the diseases, he claims to cure, is himself, ignorant. Well would it be for the medical profession, and well for the public, if it could be

truly said “*Palnam ferat qui meruit*”; that there was public intelligence enough and virtue enough to reward the good and condemn the bad; adopting the maxim of “honor to whom honor is due,” and driving from the bosom of society the baneful influence of those who are utterly unworthy of public confidence or respect. If every one would exercise good common sense in choosing their physician, much of the evil which now exists would be corrected. But with too many, a credulity, unsustained by reason, governs this matter. Who has not seen instances, of men, shrewd in their business affairs, but who, when compelled by illness to employ a physician, call one, perhaps, because he claims to have learned the art of curing disease of all kinds, by a two years residence with the Indians; or to have bought the skill of some old mother of the wigwam, not considering at all the probable imposition of the charlatan, or the fact that the rude Indians understand the science of medicine just as well as they do the rules of the Fine Arts, or the Philosophy of Newton? Or they may adopt an equally preposterous course of conduct by employing some pretending, new light son of the art, who claims to cure by applying a little more of the same *poison* which made them sick; and swallow the mystic drop, with a faith which in a rightly directed cause, might be able to remove mountains.

Thus is reason ignored and common sense trodden under foot. Notwithstanding the host of nostrums which have been used, the number of diseases which assail the human family, has not been, by such means diminished. While some accidentally may have been cured, others by such instrumentality have been greatly aggravated; and the regular, intelligent physician, finds no diminution to the list of cases requiring his skill and attention.

Humanity demands that the physician who is worthy of our confidence, should receive not only our respect, but kindness. Let it be well understood, that ignorance and learning, real skill and mere pretention have little affinity for each other,

and that it is both unjust and ungenerous, to attempt to combine them, by way of mutual consultation or action. No honorable mind will require it, or honorable physician yield to its demands. It is the public, who suffer from empiricism and not the intelligent physician ; but it is a duty devolving upon the profession, to disabuse the public mind, as far as possible, from the evils of quackery, in every form ; and to minister a *guiding* as well as *healing* influence to all who are willing to receive such benefits.

Gentlemen, to hold the position you ought, and gain the success you may, it is necessary that you be industrious, reading, thinking men, and you should be self-relying. *Self-reliance*, is a true plebeian principle ; there is nothing patrician or aristocratic, in its nature. It seeks not support from state patronage, or ancestral honors. It flings from itself every foreign support, and stands alone on its own resources, and rises by its own strength. Thus disencumbered, it speeds its way up the steep ascent to success and to fame, and wins laurels of its own, freshly gathered with its own hands, and like the hero of Austerlitz, disposes of garlands and diadems, which itself has won.

When Marcus Tullius Cicero, the illustrious Roman orator, consulted the oracle of the Fane of Delphi, to the question, “By what means shall I obtain the greatest and most honorable fame ?” received for answer, “By following the dictates of your own judgment and not the opinion of the multitude.” The truth and wisdom of the answer justified its adoption. The young Roman made it the governing principle of his life. And though without ancestral honors, he won his way up from plebeian origin to an imperishable fame. He was elected successively to the Questorship, Ædile, Prætorship, a Roman Senator, Dictator and Consul ; and amidst the plaudits of an admiring people, he was awarded the title of Father of his country.

Self-reliance, of course implies true merit. To know one's duty, is necessary for its right performance : but having ac-

quired that knowledge, “*act your own judgment.*” Self-reliance inspires genius and arouses a laudable ambition. The annals of greatness are full of instances, illustrative of this principle. If you have no confidence in yourself, no one, be assured, will have confidence in you. Self-reliance will give a clear head and a steady hand. It will enable its possessor to surmount obstacles, with sound judgment and energy of purpose.

Self-conceit is totally a different quality from that of self-reliance. The two need not be confounded. The former is but the *tinsel* ; the latter the *solid gold*. The one is worn by the ignorant pretender, who is wanting in modesty ; who substitutes chicanery for truth ; and who is rendered powerless before the gaze of intelligence, and luxuriates only amidst the darkness of ignorance ; while the other is undimmed by exposure and unscathed by the closest tests and most intelligent scrutiny.

Prudence in a physician, is also of great importance. Guard against error. Never forget that “every patient considers his or her case of the utmost importance.” Be watchful of every trifle which may affect it—remembering ever in your prescriptions, the part that nature is to act in accomplishing a cure. Prudence should not only be your companion while with your patients, but in your social intercourse and in all your business transactions. The practice of prudence hurts no man, but the want of it has ruined thousands. You will need patience also. To travel day after day the same streets—to go abroad in all weathers—to leave a warm fire and a circle of friends, or a comfortable bed, to encounter the cold winds and darkness in the winter’s night storm,—to leave behind the delights and charms of a pleasant home, when weariness is heavy upon you—to visit the poor, the suffering or wretched and sometimes the unthankful—these surely require the exercise of patience.

It may sometimes be your sad duty to watch over the slow but sure ebbing of life—to hear the groans of human suffering

which your art cannot relieve. Wherever or whenever such a scene may occur, it is appalling to the human heart.

“Come to the bridal chamber, Death !
 “Come to the mother, when she feels
 “For the first time her first born’s breath ;
 “Come when the blessed seals
 “That close the pestilence are broke,
 “And crowded cities wail its stroke ;
 “Come in consumptions ghastly form,
 “The earthquake shock, the ocean storm ;
 “Come when the heart beats high and warm,
 “With banquet song, and dance and wine,—
 “And thou art terrible ; the tear, the groan,
 “The knell, the pall, the bier
 “And all we know or dream or fear,
 “Of agony, are *thine*.”

Let not the clammy sweat—the heaving chest—the tremulous and broken pulse, which mark with unerring certainty the closing scene, cause a remission in your attentions. A thousand offices of kindness you may perhaps administer. Do not abandon what you cannot cure. Let the common sympathies of our nature never desert you at such a moment. Patiently render every possible attention to mitigate the pangs of the dying, or soothe the sorrows of surviving friends. The voice of nature invites us to regard sacredly these tender offices ; as we too, in our turn, shall need them—

“For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
 “This pleasing, anxious being e’er resigned ;
 “Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
 “Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind ?
 “On some fond breast the parting soul relies ;
 “Some pious drops the closing eye requires ;
 “E’en from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
 “E’en in our ashes live their wonted fires.”

The standing of a Physician is not a little determined by the course he pursues in respect to liberality in pecuniary transactions. A course of parsimony, is *derogatory* to the dignity and honor of the medical profession. It would also be bad policy in a pecuniary point of view—by trying to save a *penny*, a *pound* may be lost. Would you receive liberal fees for your professional services, be liberal yourself.

Frequent instances will occur where you should charge nothing ; especially for some trifling advice or medicine. Let your Day Book or Ledger contain no sixpenny charges. To the poor always extend a liberal hand. Never withhold from the many attention or aid which their circumstances may demand, that shall be in your power to bestow. Let the Divinely inspired teachings of Christianity, guide your conduct, in this, as well as in all other things relating to moral action. "Give and it shall be given unto you ; good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."

The position which the physician occupies before the public, renders it extremely important that he should be a model of the good citizen. He should be punctual to his engagements, as far as the nature of his possession will permit. Fidelity and integrity should be strongly marked characteristics of the man. He should also be a patron of learning—a peace maker, and a law and order abiding citizen. And, well will it be for him and well for the community in which he lives, if he is truly a Christian. His daily intercourse with the people will afford him continued opportunities of doing good, beyond the mere professional limits ; not as a lay preacher ; but as a noble example, in his own life and conversation, of a "living epistle, known and read of all men."

Gentlemen, you have such among those, who, in the halls of this venerable Institution have blessed you, both by their instruction and their noble and virtuous example. Carry with you hence, the impress of that sterling worth ; so that, when around you, riper age shall have gathered its fruits, you too, may be beloved and revered, for learning, virtue, and usefulness. Let yours ever be an elevated aim. Seek to maintain such a position, that from thence, you may look down a profound distance, to the region of mediocrity.

Stray not into any of the misty and bewildering paths of empiricism. Fraternise harmoniously with all who merit

your confidence or respect, and may prosperity and happiness crown all your labors ; and the evening of life, like the sun, after a brilliant day, which illumines with golden edge the summer evening clouds, that do not obscure, but adorn its setting, promising a bright to-morrow ; close *calmly* and *serenely* over you, with full assurance of a glorious immortality.

